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**Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba**

## Letter dated 8 February 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to address you in order to transmit the following statement by the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations concerning the expulsion of a group of Cuban businessmen from the Hotel María Isabel Sheraton in Mexico City on 3 February 2006 in application of what is known as the Helms-Burton Act, one of the provisions of the unjust and criminal embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (see annex).

This disgraceful incident offers one of the most convincing examples of the extraterritorial character of the United States embargo against our nation. This was confirmed by the recent statements of United States Department of State spokesman Sean McCormack, who, in answering questions from the press about the incident, said that United States law applied to United States corporations or their subsidiaries no matter where they might be, whether in Mexico City or in Europe or South America.

In our view, it is essential to keep all the States Members of the United Nations duly informed of such incidents, which once again expose the disdain of the United States Government for international law and for the expressed will of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which on 8 November 2005 once again adopted by an overwhelming majority resolution 60/12 entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

I should appreciate it if this statement could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 18, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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## Annex to the letter dated 8 February 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

## Statement by the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations

The tentacles of the embargo and the criminal economic war waged by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba are ready to reach into any spot on earth, even to the detriment of the sovereignty and laws of other States.

So it proved recently in Mexico, where a Cuban business delegation was evicted from the Hotel María Isabel Sheraton in the Federal District on the express orders of the United States Treasury Department.

There a meeting was scheduled with major United States firms and corporations interested in the potential of the energy market in the largest of the Caribbean islands.

Organized by the U.S.-Cuba Trade Association, the meeting was open to the press and was attended by executives from Valero Energy Corporation, the largest refiner in the United States, the National Foreign Trade Council and companies such as ExxonMobil and Caterpillar. Representatives from the Louisiana Department of Economic Development and the Texas Port of Corpus Christi were also to participate.

The Cuban delegation was made up of 16 officials, headed by Raúl Pérez del Prado, Deputy Ministry of Basic Industry, who were expelled from the Hotel María Isabel Sheraton this past Friday. The hotel's management confiscated the deposit that the Cuban mission had paid for a three-night stay and forwarded it to swell the sum of Cuban funds, amounting to millions of dollars that the United States Government illegally and arbitrarily holds frozen in North American banks.

The United States businessmen attending the meeting criticized the Washington-ordered eviction of the Cuban delegation.

The Sheraton Hotel, which is located on the Paseo de la Reforma in the Federal District of Mexico and owned by the firm of Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide with headquarters in Phoenix, Arizona, cancelled a contract back in 1992 with the then National Tourism Institute of Cuba, on the grounds that the Torricelli Act prohibited United States corporations and their subsidiaries from establishing trade ties with Cuba.

On this occasion, company spokesperson Ellen Gallo said that the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the United States Treasury Department had ordered the company to apply the Helms-Burton Act in its hotel in the Mexican capital. Gallo acknowledged that the money the Cuban delegation had paid the hotel had been sent to OFAC by the express order of that agency.

According to the daily newspaper *El Universal*, the spokesperson for the United States embassy, Judith Bryan, argued that since the hotel was owned by a United States company the hotel was obliged to comply with United States law.

In view of the affront, the Cuban-United States meeting, the sixth to bring together business people of both nations, had to be continued in the Hotel Colón Misión, where Deputy Minister Pérez del Prado denounced to the press the absurd, disgraceful and irrational incident at the Sheraton and stressed how strange it seemed that United States laws should be applied extraterritorially in the sister republic of Mexico.

For the Cubans, the OFAC order, which went so far as to deny the Cuban delegation the right to have a meal or even to move about the corridors of the Sheraton, came as no surprise.

For more than 46 years Cuba has confronted the inhuman and criminal blockade, which has been criticized in the United Nations General Assembly by a vote of 182 countries, including Mexico.

The longest embargo in history is a shameful thing for an imperial power that sets itself up as policemen to the world and seeks to subdue 11 million Cubans with a chokehold. But it is also an affront to the sovereignty of the people of Benito Juárez, who themselves have suffered directly from the voracity of their powerful neighbour.

Once again, imperial pride and arrogance aimed to cut short a respectful and fruitful encounter between citizens of the two nations. It is a reflection of its impotence to quell the rising opposition manifested by broad sectors of the United States to this foolish and criminal policy. It is an expression of fear of the strength of the revolution, its economic prospects and the success of the energy strategy that is revolutionizing the country. The current Administration of the United States of America reveals itself increasingly as full of hatred, mean-spirited and capable of a repugnant and cowardly pettiness.

New York, 9 February 2006